

Article - Health - General

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§5–611.

(a) Except as provided in § 5–613(a)(3) of this subtitle, nothing in this subtitle may be construed to require a physician or physician assistant to prescribe or render medical treatment to a patient that the physician or physician assistant determines to be ethically inappropriate.

(b) (1) Except as provided in § 5–613(a)(3) of this subtitle, nothing in this subtitle may be construed to require a physician or physician assistant to prescribe or render medically ineffective treatment.

(2) (i) Except as provided in subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, a patient's attending physician may withhold or withdraw as medically ineffective a treatment that under generally accepted medical practices is life-sustaining in nature only if the patient's attending physician and a second physician certify in writing that the treatment is medically ineffective and the attending physician informs the patient or the patient's agent or surrogate of the physician's decision.

(ii) If the patient is being treated in the emergency department of a hospital and only one physician is available, the certification of a second physician is not required.

(c) Nothing in this subtitle may be construed to condone, authorize, or approve mercy killing or euthanasia, or to permit any affirmative or deliberate act or omission to end life other than to permit the natural process of dying.

(d) A health care provider shall make reasonable efforts to provide an individual with food and water by mouth and to assist the individual as needed to eat and drink voluntarily.

(e) (1) Nothing in this subtitle is intended to preclude a separate decision by a health care agent or surrogate regarding the provision of or the withholding or withdrawal of nutrients and fluids administered by artificial means.

(2) Nothing in this subtitle authorizes any action with respect to medical treatment, if the health care provider is aware that the patient for whom the health care is provided has expressed disagreement with the action.

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